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THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE NEW SOVIET UNION:
THE FUTURE OF THE USSR'S
MULTINATIONAL ARMED FORCES

Susan L. Clark

January 1991

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PREFACE

This paper is one component of a study performed by the Institute for Defense Analyses for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. This paper looks at the specific issue of the effects of nationalities problems on the Soviet military. The study as a whole examines a range of factors influencing the Soviet force structure, such as arms control, changing threat assessments, and perceived security requirements.

This study was conducted under the task entitled "The Evolution of Soviet Thinking About Security Policy."

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper analyzes the effects of increasing inter-ethnic tensions on the Soviet armed forces. While nationalist sentiments have long been a factor in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's policies of glasnost' and democratization have allowed these tensions to come to the surface.

Three factors related to the nationalities issue are addressed in this paper. First, problems with increased incidents of ethnically based hazing (*zemiyachestvo*) are discussed. Specifically, the greatest problems have been in the construction troops and it is the non-Slavic nationalities, especially Central Asians, who seem to be victimized the most. The second factor examined is the problem of enforcing the draft. Particularly in the last two years, draft evasion has risen dramatically, largely owing to the independence movements within most of the Soviet republics, as well as to concerns about hazing. Third, this paper assesses the major cases of ethnic unrest within the Soviet Union since December 1986 and the military's role in quelling this unrest. For the most part, the military has objected strenuously to being used in a policing role. However, as events in the Baltics in January 1991 illustrated, there are certainly some segments of the Soviet armed forces that are quite prepared to perform this function.

The effects of nationalist tensions on the Soviet military are significant. Nationalism has been an important factor in spurring the debates in the USSR about an all-volunteer force and the creation of national or territorial formations. In the broader sense, the question for the future will be whether the military (or segments of it) will be willing to act as the glue holding together a disintegrating Soviet Union.

THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE NEW SOVIET UNION: THE FUTURE OF THE USSR'S MULTINATIONAL ARMED FORCES

A. INTRODUCTION

For all the skill and adroitness Soviet President Gorbachev has displayed throughout his leadership, particularly in his handling of foreign policy issues, he has demonstrated a marked lack of understanding in one crucial area--relations among the various nationalities of the Soviet Union. As nationalist tensions continue to build in various regions of the Soviet empire, evolving in some cases into de facto civil war, the Soviet military finds itself in a most difficult position. The armed forces are faced not only with combating nationalist tensions within their organization, but also with quelling nationalist unrest in the various republics and regions when local forces prove incapable of doing so. Difficulty notwithstanding, the events in the Baltics during January 1991 and the military's actively aggressive role in these actions indicate that at least some of the highest ranking members of the Soviet armed forces may be increasingly willing to take on such duties.

This paper examines the challenge that tensions among Soviet nationalities are posing and will continue to pose for the Soviet armed forces. First, it lays the foundation for understanding the sources of these tensions and the reasons for the explosion of these feelings over the last several years. The paper then turns to an analysis of the specific problems facing the military in this context, and concludes with an assessment of the implications of nationalist tensions for the future structure of the Soviet military. In essence, will it be able to survive as an "internationalist" organization, or will it move toward a nationally and territorially based system? In this context, the implications of the Baltic events certainly must be considered.

B. UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONALITIES ISSUE IN THE USSR AND THE REASONS FOR ITS ERUPTION

Several factors must be taken into account when trying to understand the nationalities factor in Soviet domestic policy today. The first and most straightforward factor is that of changing demographic trends in the country. Between 1979 and 1989, the Slavic population (Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian) grew by an average of only 5.3 percent, whereas the Transcaucasians (Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians) increased by an average of 15.7 percent, and the Central Asians (Uzbeks, Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Tajiks, and Turkmen) saw an average population explosion of 34.1 percent during those 10 years. Thus, while the Russians remain just slightly over 50 percent of the total Soviet population, this percentage is declining, and the continuing downward trend has serious implications for a leadership that has relied on Slavic domination and control from the center. These trends are illustrated in greater detail in Table 1.

Yet even before such dramatic shifts in the population make-up, tensions among various nationalities certainly existed. What has long been missing is an appreciation by the central leadership of how to handle these problems effectively. That deficiency in the leadership is the second factor that must be considered. An article in the Soviet journal *Social Sciences* explains this leadership failure quite well (at least until the Gorbachev period), albeit perhaps too broadly. In it, Yulian Bromley argues that Lenin undertook a valid nationalities policy, while Stalin sought to squelch any nationalist expressions, namely by paying less attention to specific cultural, linguistic, and other needs of national groups, by phasing out organizations that dealt with ethnic problems, and by ruthlessly penalizing ethnic assertiveness. Moreover, after World War II, some republics were subsidized (from the center) more than others, creating the idea that some ethnic groups were more privileged. This trend continued under Brezhnev and was further exacerbated by an ideology that insisted that such problems did not exist.¹ This analysis shows that, faced with such attitudes, it is not surprising that ethnic tensions have come to the surface today. It is important to recognize, however, that the expressions of nationalism evident under Khrushchev and Brezhnev generally aimed only to establish that all Soviet peoples have equal rights under Soviet law and that each ethnic group should be allowed to practice its own culture and traditions. Today's nationalism, on the other hand, has incorporated

¹ Yulian Bromley, "Ethnic Problems and Perestroika," *Social Sciences*, no. 1, 1990, pp. 23-25.

Table 1. USSR's Major National Groups' Weight In Population Total

National Group	Numbers (000s)			Share of USSR Population ¹		
	1979	1989	% Change 1979-89	1979	1989	% Change 1979-89
Republic Nations						
Armenians	4,151	4,627	11.5	1.6	1.6	0
Azerbaijanis	5,477	6,791	24.0	2.1	2.4	.3
Belorussians	9,463	10,030	6.0	3.6	3.5	(0.1)
Estonians	1,020	1,027	0.7	0.4	0.4	0
Georgians	3,571	3,983	11.6	1.4	1.4	0
Kazakhs	6,556	8,138	24.1	2.5	2.9	0.4
Kirgiz	1,906	2,531	32.8	0.7	0.9	0.2
Latvians	1,439	1,459	1.4	0.5	0.5	0
Lithuanians	2,851	3,068	7.6	1.1	1.1	0
Moldavians	2,968	3,355	13.0	1.1	1.2	0.1
Russians	137,397	145,071	5.6	52.4	50.8	(1.6)
Tadzhiks	2,898	4,217	45.5	1.1	1.5	0.4
Turkmen	2,028	2,718	34.0	0.8	1.0	0.2
Ukrainians	42,347	44,136	4.2	16.6	15.8	(0.8)
Uzbeks	12,456	16,686	34.0	4.8	5.9	1.1
Other Nationalities²						
Bashkirs	1,371	1,449	5.7	0.5	0.5	0
Chuvash	1,751	1,839	5.0	0.7	0.7	0
Germans	1,936	2,036	5.1	0.7	0.7	0
Jews	1,811	1,449	(20.0)	0.7	0.5	(0.2)
Mordvins	1,192	1,154	(3.2)	0.5	0.4	(0.1)
Poles	1,151	1,126	(2.2)	0.4	0.4	0
Tatars	6,185	6,646	7.4	2.4	2.3	(0.1)
Total Slavs	190,358	200,363	5.3	73.0	70.5	(2.5)
(Belorussians, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians)						
Total Moslems	38,877	49,176	26.5	14.9	17.4	2.5
(Azerbaijanis, Bashkirs, Kazakhs, Kirgiz, Tadzhiks, Tatars, Turkmen, Uzbeks)						

Adapted from: Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Warsaw Pact Cohesion and the Crisis of 1989-1990: Demographic Trends and National Conflict," in Lawrence Freedman, ed., *Demographic Change and Western Security* (forthcoming).

Notes:

1. The USSR population total in 1979 was 262 million; in 1989, 285.7 million--a 9 percent increase.
2. Moslem groups enumerated in the 1989 census other than Moslem union republic nations numbered 5.6 million (2 percent of the population total). Tatars, chuvashi, Mordvins, and Bashkirs all had autonomous republics within the RSFSR. Jews, Germans, and Poles had no autonomous status and were dispersed.

not only these aims, but also demands for republic constitutions guaranteeing many of the rights of a sovereign state.²

A third, and interconnected, factor to be considered when looking at this issue has been best articulated by Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone. That is, the socialist concept has evolved as a Russian one, with the long-term result that anti-Russian nationalism has spread throughout the USSR. As the Soviet state took shape, it failed to develop *Soviet*-based supranational organizations; instead *Russian* traditions, approaches, and culture became the basis. Consequently, national antagonisms have only become worse over time rather than disappearing, as the leaders had originally anticipated.

Finally, looking at the current crises, there is also the "Gorbachev" factor. Being the only General Secretary not to have worked outside the Russian Republic, Gorbachev did not gain from his life and work experiences a sensitivity to national issues, at least as pertains to non-Russians. And to make matters worse, his policies of glasnost', perestroika, and democratization have helped bring tensions among nationalities within the USSR to the surface. Whereas before ethnic outbursts were quickly repressed and kept away from public scrutiny, today these long-suppressed feelings are publicized in the media both at home and abroad. Moreover, the deteriorating economic situation throughout the Soviet Union only further aggravates simmering hostilities. Thus, the expressions of nationalism need to be understood in the context of the other crises in the Soviet system, such as the breakdown of the economy and the changing (and diminishing) roles of the Communist Party and ideology. As Gerhard Simon has suggested, the questioning of ideology has left a void, which nationalism now seems to be filling.³ In short, Gorbachev's policies have unleashed strong passions that will contribute to the further disintegration of the Soviet empire.

C. THE EFFECT OF NATIONALITIES ON THE SOVIET MILITARY

With a general understanding of the basic dimensions of the ethnic problem in the USSR, it is now possible to turn to a detailed examination of the implications of this problem for the future of the Soviet armed forces. It is crucial to understand that the Soviet military has been manned based on the principle of internationalism. In other words, the

² This is discussed more fully in Richard P. Nathan and Erik P. Hoffmann, "Modern Federalism," unpublished paper.

³ As discussed at the World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies in Harrogate, Britain, July 1990.

Soviet system encourages the mixing of its numerous nationalities down to the unit level (in fact, the number of different nationalities in each unit, division, etc. has been increasing). The system has also adhered to the principle of extraterritoriality; i.e., conscripts have been sent to serve in areas remote from their homes. The premise is that these methods encourage the development of an internationalist, all-union esprit de corps. Of late such an approach has been increasingly challenged and criticized. Each ethnic group's greater awareness of and pride in its own culture, traditions, and language has played a key role in this growing criticism.

Nationalism has manifested itself in a variety of ways, with the military often finding itself caught between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Within its own ranks, the military has found the problem of *dedovshchina* (hazing) to be a subject of increasing concern, and one now openly discussed by military personnel and civilians alike. Hazing, coupled with independence movements in every Soviet republic, has had an extremely negative effect on the conscription process, particularly during the 1990 drafts. Finally, as ethnic tensions have flared in various regions of the country, the army's regular troops have repeatedly been called in to help restore order. Such actions have not only further fueled anti-military sentiments among the populace at large, but have also contributed to the military's demoralization. The military has wanted to retain its role as the protector against external threats; it has not wished to perform policing functions, or so it seemed until the Baltic events of January 1991. The apparent willingness of many military personnel to engage in this latest instance of repression by force is indeed disturbing, although one still should not assume that *all* participants in the crackdown did so willingly. The subsection devoted to the issue of the domestic use of force (Section C3, below) will examine several of the most serious cases of ethnic unrest, the military's role in each case, and possible changes in the central leadership's view of how and when to use such force.

1. *Hazing Incidents*

As is to be expected, the demographic trends for the Soviet population as a whole are also mirrored in the conscriptable pool of young Soviet men. The Slavic nationalities still make up roughly 60 percent of the draft-age cohort, but the percentage of conscripts coming from the Transcaucasus and Central Asia grew from 28 percent in 1980 to 37 percent in 1988; if draft policies were to remain the same until the end of the century, these groups would then make up 50 percent of the conscriptable pool. The current Ministry of Defense military reform plan does call for several significant changes, including an overall

reduction in personnel, more reliance on volunteers (on a contract basis), and plans for an alternative service program, all of which should considerably alleviate the need to rely on the "less reliable" nationalities. Nevertheless, as long as the Soviets maintain a conscript-based system, the shifting composition of the manpower pool will remain an issue.

It is also necessary to take into account in which branches certain nationalities apparently serve. Based on emigre information and a familiarity with the Soviet military press, it appears that, historically, those men who were smartest and the product of a good political background were sent into the Air Force, Strategic Missile Troops, and the Navy, as well as the Airborne and Spetsnaz forces. The Air Force and Navy are predominantly Slavic, the majority being Russian, while the Strategic Missile Troops have more minorities, but they probably serve mostly in support and manual labor roles. The clearest division is seen between combat and noncombat units, where combat units are staffed by an obvious majority of Slavs; minorities in these units generally have only non-combat roles and training.⁴ The minorities perceived to be least reliable are sent to construction units and other assignments where they frequently will never even have a gun. As the demographic pool shifts, the Soviets are faced with problems of how to alter their assignment policies, a dilemma which can be lessened through negotiated and unilateral force cuts. Moreover, as the republic-level governments are placing increasing restrictions on where their draftees can serve, the central leadership faces a very uncertain future about the manning of its "multinational" military force. Finally, with reports that some 15,000 conscripts have died in the last 5 years during their military service--as many deaths as officially reported during the entire 10 years of fighting in Afghanistan--increasing opposition to the draft is hardly surprising.⁵

Increasing tensions among increasing numbers of different ethnic groups, together with the greater publicity allowed by Gorbachev's policies, have combined to make cases of hazing, or *dedovshchina*, a subject of common discussion. The Soviets have identified two types of this behavior: *starikovshchina* (the hazing of newer conscripts by older ones) and *zemlyachestvo* (ethnic-based hazing). When such discussions first became the subject

⁴ Alexander R. Alexiev and S. Enders Wimbush, eds., *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army: Asset or Liability?* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988), pp. 130-144.

⁵ According to Lt. General Katusev, chief military prosecutor, one-third of all noncombat deaths were the result of criminal acts (which would include *dedovshchina*), while two-thirds were accidents. Also, one in four deaths was labeled a suicide (which, according to other sources, is sometimes used to disguise the fact that the conscript actually died as a result of hazing). Katusev's remarks cited in *Radio Liberty: Report on the USSR* (hereafter *Radio Liberty*), 21 December 1990, p. 31.

of considerable interest, the military generally took the position that most of the hazing incidents were due to senior-junior relations (*starikovshchina*); it was only through extensive reporting of cases of nationalist-based hazing that some of the senior military leaders finally admitted that this latter type of hazing also existed and represented a growing problem.

As with all discussions of Soviet military views, the subject of *dedovshchina* is open to a variety of interpretations, although as a rule the general officer corps tends to be somewhat dismissive of the problem, while more junior officers perceive it as quite serious. For example, in an interview in *Argumenty i fakty*, Lt. Colonel V. Durnev contended that ethnic relations were the most serious problem facing the Soviet military today. In his own unit, 80 percent of all *dedovshchina* activities in 1989 were ethnically motivated.⁶ Within the officer corps, differing assessments of the extent of *dedovshchina* are obviously attributable in part to varied career experiences. Those officers who have served in relatively homogeneous (i.e., mainly Slavic) forces would be less likely to have witnessed as many hazing cases, especially cases of *zemlyachestvo*. Thus, those serving in the Air Force, Navy, and Strategic Missile Troops would tend to have experienced fewer problems than those commanding troops in the Army or construction units.

The official statistics on *dedovshchina* seem to lag behind private accounts and press reports. For example, according to the Directorate of Military Tribunals, in 1989 1,990 men were sentenced for *dedovshchina*, while the highest number of convictions was approximately 4,000 in 1985.⁷ By these figures, the Directorate obviously tries to create the impression that the extent of the problem is diminishing, a theme reinforced by some senior military officers.⁸ Many military reports also emphasize that the press is distorting and exaggerating the problem. However, other evidence points to the contrary.

What the statistics and press reports do indicate is that the number of men punished for such behavior is decreasing, but not that the number of incidents is on the decline. Several factors must be considered when examining this information. First, the officers

⁶ Interview in *Argumenty i fakty*, no. 8, 1990, as reported in *Radio Liberty*, 13 April 1990, p. 35.

⁷ "In the Light of Glasnost--Questions and Answers," *Veteran*, no. 36 (3-6 September), 1990, p. 15, as translated in Joint Publications Research Service, *Soviet Union: Military Affairs* (hereafter JPRS-UMA) 90-026, p. 18.

⁸ See, for example, Lt. Gen. Muranov's article in *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 September 1990, also translated in JPRS-UMA-90-023, pp. 46-47. This is not to say, however, that all senior military officials take such positions. For a more balanced approach, including a recognition that this problem is increasing,

who have hazing problems within their units may frequently choose to ignore this behavior because, by reporting such incidents, they may damage their own careers and risk being seen to be ineffective in maintaining discipline within their own units. In addition, some of them believe that this is simply a part of what happens during military service, and while they may not condone it, they are not willing to take steps to stop it. This passivity is only compounded by the inability (or unwillingness) of some of the officers and NCOs to understand and get along with some of the nationalities, such as Georgians and Armenians.⁹ Another issue comes into play when looking at the number of incidents the soldiers do decide to report: the victims of hazing realize that they will have to continue to co-exist with their abusers and that reporting the abuse will only make their own lives more difficult. The victims of *starikovshchina*, in particular, may decide to wait for the next batch of conscripts to appear and to mete out their own punishment on the newest members of the unit.

An issue that has attracted considerable attention in the coverage of *dedovshchina* is whether certain nationalities are consistently singled out for abuse. There is a general feeling that Uzbeks and Georgians, as well as Armenians and Balts, are most frequently the targets of *dedovshchina*, and that the number of cases is increasing steadily (and alarmingly). Whether they are, indeed, singled out or whether these nationalities tend to be more vocal about the problem and thereby attract more attention remains open for debate. However, there have been numerous reports of coffins being returned home, sealed apparently in an attempt to hide the fact that the men died as a result of hazing, not suicide, as has been officially stated in such cases. Furthermore, given general Slavic attitudes toward these nationalities, it would not be surprising that they do bear the brunt of such attacks.

Finally, there is universal consensus that the greatest number of cases of *dedovshchina* occur in the construction units. As has been discussed above, these units are filled mainly by those ethnic groups that have the poorest command of the Russian language, are assumed to be less reliable than the Slavic nationalities, etc., such as the Uzbeks. Moscow has taken several actions designed to alleviate this problem in the

see Maj. General A. Ukolov, "A Sentence on the 'Dedovshchina'," *Kommunist Vooruzhennykh Sil* (hereafter KVS), no. 18 (September), 1989, also translated in JPRS-UMA-900-003, pp. 19-23.

construction units particularly and throughout the military more broadly. First, as a way of diffusing the growing public opposition to sending conscripts outside their native republics, the central leadership is allowing more draftees, particularly those sent to construction units, to fulfill their service in their own republic. For its part, the Ministry of Defense's military reform proposal calls for the elimination of road construction units from the Soviet Armed Forces by 1994, a step which should significantly ease the military's problems with *dedovshchina*. On 6 September 1990, Gorbachev issued a Presidential Decree, "On Certain Measures to Strengthen Social and Legal Protection of Service Members," which is designed to ensure military personnel's safety, including protection against hazing incidents. In November, he appointed a commission to look into the high rates of deaths and injuries for Soviet military personnel in peacetime, which must deal at least in part with the hazing problem.¹⁰

2. The Crisis with the Draft

The Soviet Union relies on a professional officer corps and conscripted soldiers to fill the ranks of its armed forces. Until the past several years, there were apparently only limited numbers of deserters and draft evaders. Previously, in fact, it was largely the elite and others with "connections" who would arrange for their sons to be excused from military service, or at least to obtain a relatively easy position to fulfill their service. Particularly the poorer, rural, and underprivileged young men had little expectation of avoiding this service. Today, although the elite continue to pull the necessary strings, other factors have been emerging to affect the conscription process. The rates of desertion and draft evasion have skyrocketed, especially since late-1989 and early-1990. Much of this can be explained by increased nationalism spreading throughout the Soviet Union.

First, as each republic within the Soviet Union has declared its independence or sovereignty, there have been numerous cases whereby the republic leadership and/or opposition has openly called for its young men to ignore the draft. In some cases, these men are exhorted to join military organizations being formed in their own republics.¹¹

⁹ On 3 January 1990, *Krasnaya zvezda* published a poll of officers on their relations with various nationalities and their responsibilities in dealing with multiethnic units. Also translated in JPRS-UMA-90-006, pp. 82-83.

¹⁰ There have been many reports that, since 1985, some 15,000 conscripts have died during their military service. There are also reports of increasing violence against the officer corps.

¹¹ For further information on this subject, see the Appendix.

Second, because of the military's use in quelling domestic unrest (largely due to ethnic tensions), there is increasing concern among conscriptable males and their families that once drafted, they will be sent to some turbulent area to perform such duty, contrary to their own wishes and beliefs. Finally, the problem of hazing, as discussed above, is of particular concern for many of the USSR's nationalities; as long as multi-ethnic units are formed, tensions among different ethnic groups will inevitably continue. While other factors certainly also contribute to young men's decisions not to serve--such as the military's widespread demoralization and its continually declining popularity among the population at large---the majority of the reasons can be traced (directly or indirectly) to nationalist problems.

When looking at the results of the spring 1990 draft, as compared to the previous year's results, it is quickly evident that the conscription system is breaking down. Furthermore, based on statements by Soviet leaders as well as on information published in the various presses there, these trends definitely did not improve during the fall 1990 draft. Table 2 compares the percentages of draft-age men reporting for duty in 1989 and 1990 (for the spring draft, with the figures in parentheses noting the percentages for the fall draft, when available). The problem areas which particularly stand out are the Baltic republics, Armenia, Georgia, and Uzbekistan and Kirgizia to a lesser extent. Many remain puzzled by the statistic that 100 percent reported in Azerbaijan; the general consensus seems to be that some official in the republic decided to distort the figure, for whatever reason.

In examining these figures, it is necessary to keep several considerations in mind. First, these figures may be skewed to the extent that Russian nationals live in these republics as well; therefore, if there is a relatively high percentage of Russians living in a given republic, the numbers of men reporting for duty would reflect not only those belonging to that republic's nationality, but also those who are Russian nationals. This may explain, for example, why the Baltic republic numbers are not even lower than the figures reported.¹² Second, it should be recalled that many of the "trouble" areas do not actually make up a large percentage of the total draft pool for the USSR. For example, the

¹² For example, Lithuanian Deputy Defense Minister Algimantas Vaitkaitis noted, in speaking of the recent draft, that although 8,000 of 12,000 men ordered to report did so, when actually drafted, only 1,114 Lithuanian citizens showed up, and of those only 369 were Lithuanian. Interview in *Der Morgan*, 24-25 November 1990, as translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Soviet Union* (hereafter FBIS-SOV-) 90-243-S, pp. 42-43.

Table 2. Soviet Military Draft: Percentage of Draftees Reporting, 1989 - 1990

REPUBLIC	1989	Spring 1990	Fall 1991
Armenia	100%	7.5%	28.1%
Azerbaijan	97.8	100	NA
Belorussia	100	98.9	NA
Estonia	79.5	40.2	24.5
Georgia	94	27.5	10.0
Kazakhstan	100	99.2	NA
Kirgizia	100	89.5	NA
Latvia	90.7	54.2	25.3
Lithuania	91.6	33.6	12.5
Moldavia	100	100	58.9
RSFSR	100	98.6	NA
Tajikistan	100	92.7	NA
Turkmenistan	100	90.2	NA
Ukraine	97.6	99.4	NA
Uzbekistan	100	87.4	NA

NA= Not available

Sources: Stephen Foye, *Radio Liberty: Report of the USSR*, 27 July 1990, and TASS, 7 January 1991, as reported in BBC: *Summary of World Broadcasts*, SU/0965, 9 January 1991, p. B/1.

Balts, Georgians, and Armenians combined represent only about 5 percent of the total USSR cohort reaching draft age.¹³

Yet even with these qualifications, the most significant point remains: the traditional Soviet conscription system is no longer effective, and this trend is only likely to worsen. Over the past several years, the Soviet armed forces have faced such problems as

¹³ Drawn from Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "Nationalities and the Soviet Military," in Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger, eds., *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990).

an overall decline in the numbers of ethnic Russians conscripted; steadily worsening Russian language capabilities among many of the draftees (largely because a greater portion of the draftees are coming from the Central Asian republics); increasing numbers of health problems and youths generally unfit for military service (related not only to problems with alcoholism and drug abuse, but also due to the effects of severe environmental damage on the health of the population, especially in Uzbekistan); and student deferments which have meant that the better educated young men have been more likely to escape military service.¹⁴ These problems, coupled with spreading national assertiveness and interethnic tensions, has significantly undermined the entire draft process. The Baltic republics view the Soviet military as an occupation army, while virtually every republic has placed some type of restrictions on where and how their young men will serve. The central leadership tried to diffuse some of these problems by allowing a greater percentage of the conscripts to serve in their own republic, but for most this provision does not go nearly far enough. Moreover, many of the local authorities have proven uncooperative both with respect to the draft boards and punishing deserters. Finally, as noted above, informal groups in some of the republics have frequently encouraged youths not to report for military service.¹⁵

The figures for desertion and draft evasion indicate the growing problems the Soviet military is facing in adhering to a conscription-based system. According to official Soviet statistics, there were some 2,000 cases of desertion in 1989; in 1990, the figure rose dramatically, with many of the deserters being Baltic and Transcaucasus nationals. In terms of draft evaders, there were more than 6,600 cases in 1989, which represents a six-fold increase over the previous year. Given the data provided on the 1990 drafts, the number of evaders has obviously increased exponentially. According to an interview with Col. General G. Krivosheev, the number of draft dodgers in the country as a whole is five times greater in 1990 than in 1989.¹⁶ As only one illustration of this trend, during Gorbachev's meeting with military people's deputies, a Colonel in Tbilisi working in the military registration office indicated that there are now 10,000 Georgian deserters.¹⁷ Even

¹⁴ The student deferments were increasingly restricted during the 1980s in an attempt to improve the quality of the conscript force, but these restrictions have been lifted, amid considerable debate, in large part because of the need to boost the capabilities of the civilian economy.

¹⁵ There have, however, been reports of some encouraging their young men to join the military, but namely so that they can learn military skills, "ideally"--even steal some weapons--and then return to the republic to fight for their own causes.

¹⁶ Col. General G. Krivosheev, "Conscripts, Pickets, Refuseniks...", *Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*, no. 48 (November), 1990, p. 12.

¹⁷ "Draft Figures Show Disregard for Military," FBIS-SOV-90-237, p. 77.

allowing for exaggeration of the figures, the dramatic scope of the problem is indisputable.¹⁸

While complete and detailed data on the fall 1990 draft are not yet available, it is possible to gauge the general extent of the problem. Namely, indications are that this draft appears to be worse than the spring one. In part, increasing numbers of the republic governments have instituted restrictions on where their men can serve (mainly insisting that all or a large percentage of the conscripts must be allowed to serve in their own republic). There has also been press coverage of recruiting officers going out to the schools and to prospective draftees' homes to discuss military service and try to assuage various concerns, but the numbers do not show that these efforts have had much success in inducing the men to register for the draft.

According to the USSR Ministry of Defense, on a country-wide basis, 78.8 percent of the fall conscription quota was fulfilled. In terms of specific figures for individual republics, the most recent information comes from this same MoD report. Not surprisingly, the same republics that presented the greatest problems during the spring draft continued to pose the most difficulties. As of 1 January 1991, the draft plan had only been fulfilled to the following extent in these republics: Georgia--10.0 percent; Armenia--28.1 percent; Lithuania--12.5 percent; Latvia--25.3 percent; Estonia--24.5 percent; and Moldova--58.9 percent.¹⁹ While the draft was still being carried out, in late November 1990, Lt. General Ter-Grigoryants noted that the number reporting in Azerbaijan was then 17 percent.²⁰ Another republic that has proved troublesome is the Ukraine, or at least the western parts of the republic. This is particularly significant since, according to General Moiseev, one-fifth of all draftees come from the Ukraine, which has historically been a "reliable" source for military personnel.

In the final analysis, all indications point to the fact that the Soviet conscript system is being increasingly challenged and/or ignored. While Gorbachev may have used the

¹⁸ According to the Military Prosecutor's Office, which would tend to try to minimize the problem, the number of draft evaders increased by 85.2 percent during the first eleven months of 1990 as compared to 1989, and evasion in the MVD was up more than 300 percent. Reported in *Radio Liberty*, 11 January 1991, p. 33.

¹⁹ TASS report of 7 January 1991, in *BBC: Summary of World Broadcasts*, SU/0965, 9 January 1991, p. B/1.

²⁰ Based on the fact that his figures for the other troublesome republics are relatively similar to, albeit lower than, the January 1991 report, the final percentage for Azerbaijan is probably around 25 percent. The article appeared in *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 23 November 1990, translated in FBIS-SOV-90-228, p. 69.

pretense of enforcing the draft to send troops into the most troublesome republics, few are fooled by this claim. The aim is to make a last-ditch effort to prevent the complete disintegration of the Soviet Union. Such action will only harden the determination of the young men to avoid military service, and will probably further encourage them to take up arms for their own republic instead.

3. Domestic Use of the Military and Ethnic Unrest

Over the past several years, regular army troops have been called in on numerous occasions to help put down interethnic disturbances. In fact, since 1989 troops have been deployed in Georgia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Moldavia (Moldova), Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan, and Kirghizia. It is thus clear that the level and extent of unrest is pervasive, virtually throughout the USSR.

The use of the Soviet military for such purposes has spawned considerable debate among military officers and civilians alike. The fundamental question is: what are the missions and purposes of the Soviet armed forces? There is universal consensus that their primary mission is to defend against any external threats; what the military does not want to do is to perform policing functions (although the military's role in the Baltics in January 1991 puts in question the degree to which some military decisionmakers eschew such functions). There are internal (MVD) troops and police that should fulfill these functions. For example, in a poll of almost 1,100 military officers, all "categorically objected to the use of the armed forces to prevent internal mass riots, interethnic conflicts, and to carry out national economic objectives."²¹ As the prestige of the military continues to plummet, the frustration of its officers, being faced with difficult tasks which the army should not have to perform, is increasingly evident. They have, in effect, become the last defenders of the Soviet empire.

The military's subordination to political rule is underscored by authors with the most diverse viewpoints. For example, the noted arch-conservative Karem Rash argues that "an army should never participate within its country in pacifying its fellow citizens,

²¹ Thus, there is also considerable opposition to use of the military in the civilian economy, such as in harvesting, building construction, etc. "What the Statistics Say," *Krasnaya zvezda*, 31 August 1990. There is also a series of articles by General of the Army Varennikov, Col. Vorobev, Col. Belkov and Col. (Ret.) Skorodenko in *KVS*, nos. 18 and 19, 1989 on the use of the regular army in domestic roles.

except in exceptional instances when the head of state gives the order."²² In countless discussions of the events in Tbilisi in April 1989 (see below), military officers consistently underscore that they were only doing what the political leaders told them to do.²³ Finally, in the liberal weekly publication *Moscow News*, Andronik Migranyan also notes the political leadership's control over the military, specifically to hold the Soviet Union together: "Given the continued weakening of the centre of a multinational state, when the relationship between the centre and the Union Republics is unclear, the present-day leadership has been trying to use the army in the 'old way': not only for defending the country against an external threat, but also to maintain the empire itself."²⁴ There can, of course, be no better recent illustration of such use than the events in Lithuania in January 1991. While some may dispute who is controlling whom, the bulk of the evidence indicates that Gorbachev remains in command, increasingly aligned with more conservative forces, and that he and the central military leadership are working closely together.

To more fully understand the problems surrounding the domestic use of force, it is useful to examine some of the occasions of ethnic unrest and to determine how the military's role has (or has not) changed over time. The following regions will be analyzed: Alma Ata, Kazakhstan; Tbilisi, Georgia; conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan (namely in Nagorno-Karabakh and Baku); the Baltic republics; Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Osh, Kirghizia; and Moldavia (Moldova). These are essentially in chronological order and are each examined in turn. What must be realized is that although this analysis documents the main outbreaks of tensions in these areas, in virtually every case some level of tensions and violence continues today. The events taking place in Lithuania and the other Baltic republics will be analyzed in the following section, given their importance for the longer-term perspective of the future of the USSR and the Soviet Armed Forces.

a. Kazakhstan

In December 1986, Gorbachev openly demonstrated his lack of understanding of and appreciation for nationalist sentiments. Until that time, the head of the Communist Party in Kazakhstan was Dinmukhamed Akhmedovich Kunaev, a Kazakh. Gorbachev

²² Karem Rash, "Army and Culture," *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, no. 8, 1989, translated in Joint Publications Research Service, *Soviet Union: Military History Journal* (JPRS-UMJ-) 90-001, p. 4.

²³ See, for example, Colonel Vorobev's article in *KVS*, no. 18, 1989, also translated in JPRS-UMA-90-003, p. 8.

²⁴ Andronik Migranyan, *Moscow News*, 16-23 September 1990, in JPRS-UMA-90-023, p. 31.

decided to replace him with Gennady V. Kolbin, an ethnic Russian. By doing so, Gorbachev broke the unwritten rule (begun under Stalin) that the First Secretary of the Communist Party was of Kazakh nationality, while the Second Secretary would be a Russian. The result was demonstrations and violence in Alma Ata in mid-December, with three confirmed deaths. This was the first serious nationalist incident during Gorbachev's tenure; it led him to realize that he needed to develop a better appreciation for the nationalities issue, to admit that the Kremlin's policy on nationalities had problems, and ultimately to replace Kolbin with an ethnic Kazakh, Nursultan Nazarbaev.

During the demonstrations, both law enforcement personnel and troops were used. In the wake of subsequent ethnic disturbances, the level of violence in Alma Ata appears to have been relatively minor. It is nevertheless important not only for demonstrating Gorbachev's failure to grasp the significance of the ethnic issue, but also for unleashing the proverbial genie, thereby paving the way for future demonstrations of nationalist sentiment, and for setting the precedent of using regular Soviet troops in such domestic disturbances. In July 1989, a commission was set up to investigate what had happened, with much time apparently dedicated to trying to determine whether the troops and law enforcement had been as ruthless here as they had been in Tbilisi in April 1989. The commission concluded that civilians did suffer more serious injuries than did the policing forces. However, no final report was ever published, apparently out of fear that interethnic tensions would only resurface if the commission's work continued.²⁵

b. Tbilisi, April 1989

While the demonstrations in Alma Ata marked the beginning of public manifestations of nationalist feelings, the events in Tbilisi, Georgia, in April 1989 signaled an even more significant turning point, particularly with respect to public perceptions of and attitudes toward the military. On 9 April, Soviet troops used shovels and poison gas against approximately 10,000 unarmed demonstrators, killing 19 and wounding hundreds. The order to send the troops into Tbilisi was approved at a 7 April Central Committee meeting, chaired by the conservative Yegor Ligachev and attended by Defense Minister Yazov, while Gorbachev and two of his key allies, Aleksandr Yakovlev and Eduard Shevardnadze, were all in London. The repercussions that this action have had--on political and especially military leaders--is difficult to overestimate.

²⁵ This is discussed in greater detail in Bess Brown, "The Alma-Ata Events of 1986 Reexamined," *Radio Liberty*, 9 February 1990, pp. 25-27.

Shevardnadze threatened to resign if the action was not condemned. In the end, the USSR Congress of People's Deputies (after Gorbachev's intercession) did eventually condemn the use of violence against the demonstrators, but laid the blame on the former Georgian republic leadership rather than on the central apparatus. A commission set up by the Congress of People's Deputies to investigate the events, headed by A. A. Sobchak, determined that there had been "serious errors" made by the Georgian leadership as well as by union-level party and military leaders.²⁶ In addition to laying a considerable portion of the blame on Ligachev and the others who made the initial decision, Sobchak's report is also highly critical of the military's role: "our military people have not yet grasped the elementary difference between combat operations against the enemy and our own civilian population."²⁷ The report further emphasized that, in contrast to the KGB and special MVD units, the army troops that were sent to Tbilisi were not properly trained to disperse mass demonstrations nor were they properly equipped, with the result that they ended up using shovels against the protestors.

The military has clearly been put on the defensive for its handling of the demonstrators. According to Deputy USSR Military Prosecutor Vasil'ev, the decision to break up the demonstration was "both justified and necessary."²⁸ For his part, Col. Gen I. Rodionov, who was the officer in command of troops in the Transcaucasus at the time of the violence, wrote an open letter to Shevardnadze, published in *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, in which he attacks Shevardnadze's criticisms, questions why he was not there to help make the necessary decisions when it was clear that the situation was deteriorating, and takes issue with many of the Sobchak commission's findings. Rodionov clearly feels backed into a corner and is extremely defensive and antagonistic. His feeling--that the extent of the blame being laid on the military was unfair--is certainly shared by other military officers, although this is not to say that other military officers necessarily support or condone what Rodionov did. Due to the strong negative reaction among the public, the events of Tbilisi have probably contributed more to the military's demoralization and the public's anti-military sentiment than any other event.

²⁶ For more information, see Julia Wishnevsky, "Shevardnadze Said to Have Threatened to Resign in Dispute over Tbilisi Commission," *Radio Liberty*, 2 February 1990, pp. 1-3.

²⁷ As quoted by Col. General Rodionov, *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, 20 July 1990, translated in JPRS-UMA-90-020, p. 5.

²⁸ As quoted in Wishnevsky, *Radio Liberty*, 2 February 1990.

Continuing tension between the two main independence movements, the Round Table (a coalition of dissident groups) and the Georgian National Forum, offers the possibility of additional future conflicts. This is exacerbated by the formation of the National Independence Army of Georgia, which has seized weapons, sometimes attacking militia and security forces in its attempts to acquire the weapons. More concretely, another state of emergency was declared in December 1990 in the South Ossetian area, and in January 1991 armed clashes between citizens of Ossetian nationality and Georgian militia detachments resulted in at least 20 deaths and 150 injuries. Gorbachev's attempt to control the situation by allowing only USSR (rather than Georgian) MVD troops in the area has apparently only managed to further heighten tensions between Georgia's pro-independence government and the central leadership, while not succeeding in diffusing the conflict between the Georgians and Ossetians. This only underscores the continuing nature of the violence not only in Georgia, but virtually throughout the USSR.

c. Armenian-Azerbaijani Disputes

Tense relations between the Armenians (predominantly Christian) and Azeris (mainly Moslem) have presented one of the most long-standing nationalist challenges to the Gorbachev leadership. The first (and continuing) overt dispute which arose between the two republics revolves around the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO). Although the NKAO is located in Azerbaijan, it is inhabited mostly by Armenians, and the Armenians have demanded its full incorporation into their republic. The dispute erupted into violence in February 1988, followed by a massacre of Armenians in Sumgait (Azerbaijan), which precipitated the dispatch of Soviet troops to the area. Soviet troops were deployed in the region on other occasions as well: they policed Armenia in September 1988; they occupied Yerevan and Baku for several days in November 1988 to help stop riots there; they were deployed in NKAO in August 1989; and they established martial law in Azerbaijan in January 1990.

In January 1989, the Supreme Soviet Presidium announced that Nagorno-Karabakh would retain its autonomous status, but it would be under a special form of administration controlled from Moscow. This control lasted until November 1989, when Moscow restored control to Azerbaijan, subject to that republic's safeguarding any Armenians living in this area, a condition which the Presidium of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet rejected. As a result, tension increased in the region rather than ebbed, as the central leadership evidently had hoped it would. On 13 January 1990, hundreds of thousands of people

attended a Popular Front rally in Baku; some of the participants then began searching for and killing Armenians in the city. On 15 January, a state of emergency was declared and approximately 30,000 military personnel (regular army, MVD, and KGB troops) from other parts of the USSR (including airborne units from Moscow) were sent in after local troops failed to restore order. On 18 January a limited call-up of Army reservists was announced, but the public opposition was so strong that it was canceled 2 days later. In roughly 2 weeks, some 200 people died in the republic.

Particularly in the aftermath of the explosion of violence in Baku, contradictory feelings about the military and its role have emerged. On the one hand, some people welcomed the protection the Soviet forces offered (Azeris living near Armenia, for example, said "they felt safe only when military units were nearby"²⁹) and believed that the military's presence had saved lives. On the other hand, the military was criticized for being an "occupation army" (consistent with Baltic accusations), and Azeris claimed that this deployment was an attempt by the central leadership to prevent Azerbaijan from declaring its sovereignty. One characterization of the situation by a military officer sums up these problems very well and expresses the frustration which the military feels in playing this role: "In case of danger the local leadership and residents of cities and villages run to the Army for help, but hardly is the danger past when the servicemen immediately become 'occupiers stifling the people of Azerbaijan and spilling the blood of innocent people'."³⁰ Such contradictory assessments clearly highlight the problem the military faces when being used in a police function.

For its part, the military has accused the Popular Front of deliberately using women and children at blockades, an allegation which has only added fuel to civil-military tensions in the region and to general anti-army sentiment. Since then, the military has appealed to both the republic and central leaderships for some kind of protection against attacks on military personnel and their families.³¹ To add insult to injury, regular army troops--unlike the KGB and MVD troops--received no additional pay for going into such areas of ethnic

²⁹ Lt. Colonel V. Gavrilov, "Between Two Fires Is Where the Army Ended Up in Carrying Out a Decision by the Country's Leadership to Stabilize the Situation in the Transcaucasus," *KVS*, no. 8 (April), 1990, translated in JPRS-UMA-90-018, p. 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³¹ Hostilities have continued, as a report in *Krasnaya zvezda* on 10 March 1990 indicated. The PVO units stationed in Azerbaijan were appealing to that republic's political leaders to help stop attacks against their operational sites and residential facilities. To that date, 18 such attacks had occurred during 1990. Translated in JPRS-UMA-90-008, p. 36. The military appealed to Moscow for protection in June 1990, which was reported in *Radio Liberty*, 22 June 1990, p. 28.

unrest. However, in February 1990, the Ministry of Defense issued an order for army troops to receive hazardous duty pay when deployed away from their permanent duty stations to suppress mass disturbances. It is evident that the troops themselves would much prefer never to be used again in such a role. Indeed, perhaps this reluctance could be one reason why, for an entire week when Azeris carried out a pogrom in Baku, the military had not yet intervened. There has yet to be a satisfactory explanation for this delay in the military's use of force in January 1990.

Public access to large numbers of weapons clearly complicated the military's task in Baku and increased the casualty rates. And the availability of weapons is not diminishing, despite Gorbachev's decree of 25 July 1990, which ordered all unofficial paramilitary groups to disband and relinquish all their weapons. For example, the Armenian National Army (ANA) is reported to be the largest of all the informal paramilitary organizations in the various Soviet republics, although estimates on its size have varied dramatically, from 5,000 to over 100,000 people.³² In addition, there are reports that some 1,200 Armenians and Azeris fled their military units to fight with their fellow nationals during the Baku unrest. Such defections provide a vivid example of the system backfiring on Moscow: the ethnic minorities are drafted into the military and given military training, which they then use in local disputes against other minorities and centrally controlled forces.

In terms of the military's use of force, particularly in January 1990, several key questions have been debated in the Soviet press. First, there have been criticisms that the army troops were ill-prepared to handle the conflict. Others have questioned whether the troops were sent in at the right time, some arguing that their arrival may have been timed more with trying to save the local party leadership than with trying to protect Armenian lives, the latter threat having already been largely diffused by the time the troops arrived.³³ Indeed, the central leadership did not deny its interest in protecting the local leaders. For his part, Gorbachev argued in a television address on 20 January that "military intervention in Baku was justified, insofar as all earlier attempts to resolve the situation peacefully had failed and *'extremist forces' were attempting to seize power.*"³⁴ Defense Minister Yazov further acknowledged that the troops had been sent in "to thwart plans by the Popular Front

³² Although the ANA agreed to disband in late August 1990 to avoid another intervention by Moscow, it is extremely doubtful--given the continuing persistent clashes between Armenians and Azeris--that this has actually happened.

³³ For a more complete discussion, see Elizabeth Fuller, "Gorbachev's Dilemma in Azerbaijan," *Radio Liberty*, 2 February 1990, pp. 14-16.

³⁴ As reported in *Radio Liberty*, 2 February 1990, p. 24; emphasis added.

to seize power in Azerbaijan."³⁵ Note that in neither of these statements did the leaders emphasize that force had been used because Azeris were beating up Armenians. Finally, at least some have argued that another factor in Moscow's decision to send troops into Baku was apparently concern about the safety of nuclear weapons located there. In an interview in *Moscow News*, Vice President of the Academy of Sciences, Evgenii Velikhov, stated that the decision to send troops into Baku in January was prompted by the fear that extremists might break into the nuclear stockpiles near Baku guarded by the KGB.

As is the case in many republics of the USSR today, the ethnic disputes in this region remain far from resolved. Indeed, the situation continues to be one of a de facto civil war. But at least for now, the central leadership has apparently opted to leave the fighting to the local populations there, although the influx of additional troops into the region in early 1991 is a not-so-subtle reminder that what happened in the Baltics could also happen here. In truth, Moscow would probably wish to avoid such a confrontation under almost any circumstances given that Armenians and Azerbaijanis are so heavily armed and obviously willing to fight. Should Moscow opt for the use of violence, the result would almost certainly be a full-scale civil war between the center and republics.

d. The Baltic Republics

The Baltic republics present a different kind of challenge to the Moscow leadership than the other cases of nationalist unrest described here. In the spring of 1988, popular movements, which would ultimately challenge Moscow's authority, began to emerge in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Each republic wanted its independence restored and opposed control from Moscow; hostility in these republics has therefore not been directed at another minority nationality. The military faces a difficult situation in the Baltic republics because there, the Soviet armed forces are viewed as an occupation army. Given the great significance of the events of January 1991, particularly in Lithuania, this will be addressed separately in the next section.

The Baltic republics witnessed Soviet military troop movements as their calls for independence took shape, but these displays of strength have, at least until recently, seemed designed more for intimidation than for any direct military use. For example, shortly after Latvia declared its independence, Soviet tanks drove into Riga, ostensibly to practice for an upcoming parade, but left soon thereafter. Still, recalling Tbilisi and Baku,

³⁵ Ibid.

the Estonian Foreign Ministry submitted a protest to the Soviet Foreign Ministry about Soviet troop movements in the region during that republic's independence drive, warning that the troops should be held in check to avoid a clash with the local population. It also proposed establishing a commission that would link Estonia directly with the military so as to avoid a bloody confrontation.³⁶ Such concern is perhaps justified given a reported suggestion in early 1990 by Gen. Valentin Varennikov that the army should be used the same way in Lithuania as it was in Baku,³⁷ a statement that now appears an ominous forecast of what was to come. As noted in the Appendix, the central leadership has been clearly challenged by the Baltic republics' declarations to create their own armed forces and reject conscription into the Soviet military.

A more recent trend in events is for military authorities to claim that their personnel stationed in the region are being denied housing, medical care, registration permits, and the like, which the republic controls. In fact, in November 1990, the Latvian Supreme Soviet told the republic's municipalities not to provide the troops stationed there with supplies and social services.³⁸ Subsequently, the chairmen of the Supreme Soviets of the three Baltic republics all signed an appeal on the Soviet troops' presence which included the following statement: "While demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops, we will do nothing that would impeach the dignity and human rights of the military servicemen and their family members. At the same time we cannot take responsibility for and guarantee the satisfaction of the material and social needs of the influx of military servicemen and their families who are not controlled by our states."³⁹ The equivocation in this statement does give the Soviet armed forces stationed in the Baltics some cause for concern for themselves and their families, for the general hostility of the population toward what they consider to be an occupation army is indisputable.

For its part, the central leadership has threatened to use force if necessary to ensure the military's access to what it needs. Thus, the commander of the Baltic Military District, Lt. General Petr Chaus, warned that the army "would make every effort" to ensure that its

³⁶ Reported in *Radio Liberty*, 27 July 1990, p. 26.

³⁷ Quoted in *Moscow News*, no. 13, 1990 (referring to his interview in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*), as reported in *Radio Liberty*, 13 April 1990, pp. 30-31.

³⁸ It is not entirely clear whether this halt in services was to apply only to the Black Berets stationed there or to all military personnel. In press reports, the military has certainly indicated that the edict applied to all forces. This decree was suspended, however, by the Latvian Supreme Council on 15 January 1991.

³⁹ "Appeal to the Population of the Baltic Republics and Soviet Military Servicemen," *Sovetskaya molodezh*, 5 December 1990, p. 6, as translated in FBIS-SOV-90-250, p. 67.

personnel and their dependents received food, heat, water, etc.⁴⁰ While the central leadership has cited enforcement of the draft as its main reason for sending additional troops into the Baltics in late-1990 and early-1991, the safety of troops and their families already in these republics also provides the leadership with another "justification."

e. Dushanbe, Tajikistan

In mid-February 1990, amid rumors that Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan (as a result of the ethnic tensions there) were being resettled in Dushanbe and given preference in housing assignments, demonstrations erupted into riots which lasted for 3 days. Approximately 20 people died, hundreds were injured, and millions of rubles of damage was incurred. A state of emergency was imposed (which continues even today), and additional MVD and regular army troops were brought in. These disturbances were caused primarily by socio-economic problems; ethnic and religious reasons appear to have been secondary. Nevertheless, the potential threat that Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia poses to the central leadership should not be rejected out of hand, particularly when assessing the likelihood of future military interventions in the region.

The military actions in Dushanbe differed significantly from previous actions to quell ethnic unrest. First, after the state of emergency was declared, a Tajik national, Mamadaiez Navzhuvanov, was named military commandant of the city. It appears that in all other cases before and since, it has been a Russian national who was placed in charge of the situation. Second, at least one general complained that the troops were not allowed to shoot even in self-defense.⁴¹ Sensitivity about the military's use of force was obviously heightened in light of its use in previous cases of unrest and increasing anti-military sentiment. And third, at least one army unit that was ordered into the area refused to go, thereby forcing another unit to be sent in its place. Apparently, the refusing unit feared that Dushanbe might prove to be another Tbilisi, and it wanted no involvement in such a situation. Confronted with such evidence of military concerns, the central leadership may well deem it increasingly necessary to develop special, "reliable" units that can be sent to various regions, units that would need to be staffed only by the most "reliable" nationalities as well.

⁴⁰ As reported in *Radio Liberty*, 28 December 1990, p. 34.

⁴¹ Reported in Brown, *Radio Liberty*, 23 February 1990.

f. Osh: Kirghiz versus Uzbeks

The next major clash occurred between Kirghiz and Uzbeks in the Osh oblast of Kirghizia in early June 1990. Like the unrest in Dushanbe, it was largely attributable to socio-economic problems. The rapid population growth in Central Asia has led to increased competition for jobs, land, food, and housing.⁴² On 5 June the Presidium of Kirghizia's Supreme Soviet declared a state of emergency in Osh, and Kirghizia's minister of internal affairs, Viktor Goncharov, was appointed commandant of the city. The next day, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Lukyanov stated that army reinforcements had been sent to Kirghizia since internal security forces had been unable to cope with the violence. In subsequent days the unrest spread to the capital, Frunze, and a state of emergency was declared in areas of Uzbekistan that border the Osh oblast as well. The USSR Minister of Internal Affairs, Vadim Bakatin, expressed his concern that the local conflict in Osh could grow into an Uzbek-Kirghiz confrontation.⁴³

According to Bakatin, 1,500 regular army troops, 9000 Interior Ministry (MVD) troops, and 450 KGB border guards were sent to Osh. Military troops and civilians clashed both in Osh and in Frunze; on 9 June the commandant of Frunze gave the security forces permission to open fire if necessary. During the summer fighting, the official figure was 200 dead, although the total may well have been higher.

Despite efforts to resolve them, the problems persist. In early December 1990, MVD troops were attacked by a group of young civilians in Namangan, Uzbekistan. As a result, five MVD personnel and three civilians were killed.⁴⁴ This is only one illustration of manifestations of anti-military sentiment, particularly among the youth. It is events such as these that have precipitated--or at least justified--the central leadership's decisions to better protect the safety of military, KGB, and MVD troops, including the decision to allow troops to carry weapons to protect themselves. The problem is that such authority further heightens civil-military tensions and opens the way for even more violence, as seen in Lithuania.

⁴² A year before, the Fergana valley was the site of ethnic violence as well when Meskhetians were accused of taking jobs that should have gone to Uzbeks. Soviet troops intervened then as well.

⁴³ As reported in Bess Brown, "Ethnic Unrest Claims More Lives in Fergana Valley," *Radio Liberty*, 15 June 1990, pp. 16-18. This article provides a good summary of the events in the region.

⁴⁴ Reported in *Radio Liberty*, 14 December 1990, p. 27.

g. Moldavia and its Separatist Republics

The republic of Moldavia (or Moldova, as it has been renamed by the republic's government) has been another site of recent interethnic confrontation. Two areas declared themselves sovereign republics (retaining USSR citizenship, but not Moldovan): the Gagauz (August 1990), inhabited by ethnic Turks, and the Dnestr (September 1990), which is the left bank of Kishinev occupied primarily by ethnic Russians. In both cases, the Moldovan parliament ruled these declarations unconstitutional and imposed a state of emergency from late October until 6 December 1990.

In contrast to previous cases of ethnic conflict, it appears that only additional MVD troops were used to help control the situation, and even the regular army forces already stationed in Moldova did not directly participate in quelling the demonstrations and unrest. Indeed, Defense Minister Yazov explicitly pledged that the army would not interfere in Moldova, and although there were reports of troop movements, no significant army actions occurred. Given that the Soviet officer corps would logically be more supportive of the Dnestr position than of the Moldovan government's, the decision not to use regular army forces seems to have been a very sensible approach. As for the MVD troops, following an appeal by the Moldovan Supreme Soviet, then-Prime Minister Ryzhkov authorized MVD troops based in Kishinev to enforce the state of emergency; the troops were commanded by Col. General Yurii Shatalin, the (central) head of these forces. The Moldovan government was apparently dissatisfied with the performance of Shatalin and his troops, as there was a clear lack of cooperation between Shatalin and the government, there were reports of poor relations between the MVD and local police forces, and there were complaints that the MVD was not enforcing the state of emergency.⁴⁵

A complicating factor during this ethnic tension was the Moldovan government's call (on 23 October) to form volunteer military detachments to defend the republic's sovereignty. During the first week of November, three people were killed in Dnestr (in Dubossary), and the region called for the introduction of Soviet MVD troops to calm the situation. It appears that it was mainly these "volunteers" who, in mid-November, initiated a series of attacks against people in restaurants and on the streets, primarily against those who did not respond to them in the Moldovan language. According to TASS reports, many people in the republic are blaming the Moldovan government for the worsening

⁴⁵ The MVD believed it was carrying out its mission, namely by not allowing bloodshed, and the Gagauz also viewed the MVD to be effective in this effort. See, for example, FBIS-SOV-90-212, p. 94; FBIS-SOV-90-215, pp. 95-96; FBIS-SOV-90-217, p. 80

situation because it ordered the formation of the volunteer forces and failed to take sufficient steps to stop their wanton attacks.⁴⁶

During the state of emergency, assessments by the central press were generally more optimistic about the situation being under control than those by the local press. The Moscow leadership's reaction to this latest instance of ethnic unrest has been fairly restrained, and not necessarily as supportive of the Dnestr movement as might be expected, given that these are ethnic Russians opposing a break-away republic. The CPSU released a statement that it "has backed and now backs respect for the interests of all nations and ethnic groups and the strengthening of the sovereignty and integrity of the republics. It is resolutely opposed to all manifestations of national chauvinism and separatism, regardless of whose side they emanate from."⁴⁷ In an attempt to resolve the conflict diplomatically, Gorbachev sent his adviser Marshal Akhromeev to Moldova (on 19 November), Akhromeev having been elected by the Moldovans to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies. The aims of his mission were to have the Dnestr Supreme Soviet elections postponed. In turn, the Moldovan parliament was to denounce rumors of its incorporation into Romania and work toward developing and signing the new Union Treaty. The irony of having one of the highest-ranking military men in the Soviet Union being sent on a diplomatic mission to the republic was certainly not lost on the parties involved.

In the final analysis, although Akhromeev did not fully achieve his aims, the diplomatic solution seems to have worked. On 22 December 1990, Gorbachev issued a Presidential decree proposing the normalization of the Moldovan situation. The key elements of the decree are the following: the formation of the Dnestr and Gagauz republics is unlawful; Moldova's integrity and sovereignty are to be preserved; everyone in the republic is to have equal rights, regardless of their nationality (i.e., no discrimination on languages, etc.); and the resolution to establish a Moldovan republican guard is to be repealed. The main parties involved (the Moldovan government and the Gagauz) supported the decree, although the Moldovan Popular Front opposed it, and on 30 December the Moldovan legislature approved the decree largely as Gorbachev had originally written it. Thus, in this case, the union-level leadership proved able (apparently) to resolve the problem with little bloodshed and a minimal use of force by the central apparatus.

⁴⁶ TASS reports of 16 and 17 November 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-223, p. 83.

⁴⁷ Moscow Domestic Service, 1 November 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-213, p. 75.

D. THE IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT EVENTS

A multiplicity of events over the past several months indicate a distinct shift to the right in Gorbachev's thinking and actions, a development which clouds any hopes of improved civil-military relations or of a reduced role for the regular army in carrying out policing functions. In fact, these trends represent nothing less than a serious reversal of the democratization process. During recent months, Gorbachev has sought through a variety of ways to reassert central authority over his disintegrating union of republics. He appears to be increasingly convinced that, in order to hold this union together, the only solution may be to declare presidential rule or a state of emergency. He demonstrated this toughened stance during the Congress of People's Deputies in December 1990, where he consistently emphasized the need for law and order and for the preservation of the Soviet federation.

Even before the December meeting, there were several other ominous warnings, which also affected the military's role on the Soviet domestic scene. For example, on 27 November 1990 Defense Minister Yazov issued a decree threatening the use of force to protect military facilities and military personnel. The stress that the central leadership--such as Gorbachev, Yazov, and Kryuchkov--has placed on the importance of law and order has been as uncompromising as it has been deeply unsettling for observers inside and outside the USSR. Yet another indicator of this turn to the right was Gorbachev's decision to replace Chief of the MVD Bakatin with Boris Pugo. Bakatin had proven reluctant to use the MVD troops against local authorities in the various republics experiencing nationalist unrest; Pugo, a strong advocate of the law and order approach, clearly shows no such reluctance, as has already been demonstrated in Lithuania and Latvia. In addition, the appointment of General Gromov as the first deputy chief of the MVD only reinforces this approach.

As all these events have unfolded, the growing involvement of certain segments of the regular armed forces in domestic policing roles is evident. The events in the Baltic, in particular, provide the clearest illustrations. The decision by Gorbachev and his central leadership to send additional troops into the Baltics (as well as other troublesome republics) under the pretense of enforcing the draft was, in actuality, a poorly veiled effort to save the union from overt collapse. Given Foreign Minister's Shevardnadze's resignation in December, as well as the appointment of the Pugo-Gromov team, the plans for this operation were evidently underway for some time. Current trends show no sign of a shift toward a more moderate approach. For example, Yazov and Pugo jointly issued an order

effective 1 February allowing for joint army and police patrols--including the use of armored personnel carriers--when the situation becomes "complicated" or "tense." In other words, they have effectively provided a carte blanche for the use of military force.

In short, the legitimacy of using troops from the regular armed forces for domestic purposes is being increasingly enhanced by the central leadership. In addition to the proof cited above, it was reported in mid-December 1990 that the USSR Council of Ministers was considering a document to expand presidential powers--including the use of Soviet armed forces as internal troops--in order to enforce the law.⁴⁸ Whereas the military seemed to be the object of increasing scorn and abuse during the first several years of Gorbachev's rule, particularly in the wake of the Baltic events, the tide has shifted significantly. At least for now, the military has assumed a much stronger position in decisionmaking and is much more the originator (rather than object) of abuse against the civilian population. While this is, of course, quite a simplified overview, it does appear to represent the general trend in the military's position within the Soviet Union.

Recent events also indicate that the Soviet military is developing a force structure that allows them to send more reliable troops into such trouble spots as the Baltics. Specifically, the troops that were used in Lithuania and Latvia were special, elite forces, namely airborne units.⁴⁹ There should be no mistaking the fact that the Soviet leadership must carefully consider what forces to send into such areas, and it is clear that the military has recognized the difficulty of relying on conscripts for such duty. In fact, Yazov issued a decree in early December that in the case of an emergency (read, nationalist unrest) in the Transcaucasus region, only those servicemen who volunteered would be sent there, namely because of the high degree of danger involved.⁵⁰

All of these considerations necessarily raise the question: what is the "Soviet" military likely to look like and how is it likely to develop in the near future?

E. CONCLUSIONS

The debate about the future of the Soviet military is changing fundamentally and rapidly. The role of national tensions has been central to this debate. Looking at the

⁴⁸ As reported in *Komsomolskaya pravda*, 14 December 1990.

⁴⁹ The development of these forces is elaborated more fully in Stephen Blank's chapter in Susan L. Clark, ed., *Soviet Military Power in a Changing World* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1991, forthcoming).

⁵⁰ Reported in FBIS-SOV-90-233, p. 22.

various interethnic conflicts evident in so many of the republics, it is increasingly clear that situations of de facto civil war exist already. Moreover, the violence is directed not only against the other nationality (such as between Armenians and Azerbaijanis), but also against Soviet military personnel. In September 1990, when Gorbachev issued his Presidential decree on protecting military personnel, the military seemed to be an embattled segment of the population that was being abused because of nationalist sentiments. Today, as the military has acquired increasing power under the union leadership's turn to the right, its status and role in domestic society have become even more unclear. The more the central leadership relies on military intervention to hold the union together, the more unpopular the military becomes among the civilian population in many of the republics. From a manpower standpoint, this dilemma naturally raises serious questions about how the draft will ever be filled. In all of the options discussed below, one unfailing result is that the factor of internationalism, so long emphasized in the Soviet military, will be seriously eroded, if not eliminated.

Many options for the Soviet military's future have been under debate over the past few years. The general characteristics of these options are identified and their implications for intramilitary ethnic relations assessed. First, the possibility of adopting an all-volunteer force concept has been discussed quite thoroughly. The advantages and disadvantages have been debated widely, with those opposed primarily emphasizing the increased costs and decreased numbers of reserve forces (which leads others to ask why so many reserves are necessary for a force claiming a purely defensive orientation). Still, experiments in the Navy and Internal Troops (MVD) for an optional extended contract system are underway,⁵¹ and pending the results of these experiments, the armed forces probably will move gradually toward expanding the numbers of volunteers. Following the lead of many of the republics, even the official Ministry of Defense reform plan calls for the introduction of alternative service in the coming years. Finally, the military would like desperately to eliminate the construction troops from the Soviet armed forces. That move would not only significantly decrease the numbers of troops needed each year, but should also help to reduce the high levels of ethnic violence in the forces since the overall requirement for conscripts would be reduced, and therefore fewer of the "unreliable" nationalities would

⁵¹ The Navy is trying a 3-year contract system for senior NCOs. Also, the draft USSR Law on Defense proposes a contract system for filling both senior NCO and specialist posts in the military more broadly, in part because reinstituted student deferments have created a shortage of manpower capable of filling the high-skill jobs. The MVD experiment is to professionalize five of its units.

need to be taken. Of course, the "internationalism" of the Soviet armed forces would thus be diminished, but that result seems likely regardless of the option(s) selected.

The other hotly debated proposal is to establish national (i.e., ethnically based) or territorial formations. The territorial option would be preferred to the extent that it would be less likely to pit one nationality against another, since each territory would likely have multiple ethnic groups residing within it. Here, too, there are obvious advantages and disadvantages. Proponents argue that transportation costs will be reduced, that the rates of hazing and other intramilitary violence would be reduced, and that conscripts would be more willing to serve if they could continue to live at home, or at least in a familiar environment. Opponents rebut this argument, saying that conscripts would remain too tied to their families and would be more prone to side with pro-independence nationalist groups. They also raise such questions as who would then serve at sea and in underpopulated areas, and reason that the spirit of national (read, union) defense would be undermined completely.

One suggestion that incorporates the territorial principle is to create a two-tiered system within the military, establishing a group of reliable (read, Russian) forces under the center's jurisdiction, augmented by territorial formations under the republics' control. The reliable forces could fulfill the missions at the union level (such as naval and air defense) and would likely retain control over the Soviet inventory of nuclear weapons. The Russian Congress of People's Deputies recommended that the USSR Supreme Soviet work with the republics to establish special interrepublic units that could be used in resolving ethnic disputes (rather than sending in conscripts)--a moderated version of the territorial idea, but these units would apparently still be controlled from the center. In sum, there are a variety of options for organizing the military in the future, and if the newly established Security Council has a substantial role in selecting the option(s), the representation of each republic in the Council could bring about a much less centrally controlled structure.

When the debate about Soviet military reform began, many considered ideas such as the formation of an all-volunteer force⁵² or the creation of national/territorial formations to be quite radical. However, at that time, it was at least generally assumed that such changes would be implemented at the all-union level and that the center would still maintain control. If the divide between the center and the republics continues to widen, this

⁵² When discussing the all-volunteer concept with Soviet military officers, it becomes very clear that it is this term, not a "professional army" which should be used. In the latter case, they take this to mean that we believe their military is not professional.

assumption can no longer be taken for granted. Despite Gorbachev's Presidential decree that the individual republics have no right to form their own armed forces, and in light of the republics' past refusal to obey many of his directives, it is far from certain that republic-level forces will not emerge, particularly if the Security Council (or some other organization with center- and republic-level representation) fails to find a viable solution.

In terms of addressing the continuing problems of interethnic conflicts more broadly, the role of the MVD should not be underestimated. While the regular military is increasingly being drawn in (based on the events in the Baltic), the MVD will play a vital role. Staffed by conscripts serving a 2-year period, the MVD is, through its experiment to professionalize five of its units, looking at a contract system and has recently been implementing plans roughly to double the size of its specially trained and operational forces (from 36,000 to 67,000 men). Many former paratroopers, Afghan veterans, and men returning from Eastern Europe are being actively recruited. It is primarily these MVD troops that are used in the cases of ethnic unrest. According to Graham Turbiville, 70-80 percent of the MVD's time is spent policing such conflicts. With the appointment of Pugo and Gromov, certain changes are already evident. First, Pugo has demonstrated his greater willingness to use his forces to restore "law and order." In brief, a more militaristic approach can be expected to continue. Second, although the MVD was removed from the overall jurisdiction of the Soviet Armed Forces in March 1989, with General Gromov now the deputy head of the MVD, greater interaction between the two organizations can be expected. Turning to the question of future staffing in the MVD, Colonel General Shatalin proposed in an 11 December 1990 article in *Krasnaya zvezda* that these forces could be divided into union and union-republic units, all still remaining under central control. He at least is willing to acknowledge that the republics want to have some greater voice in deciding domestic defense issues.

A final possibility that has been discussed mainly by academic specialists is a peacekeeping force under United Nations' auspices sent into areas in the Soviet Union to control the interethnic violence.⁵³ The inherent advantages in such a solution would include allowing the military to distance itself from the domestic policing role, creating the possibility of some kind of mediated settlement between the republic leaderships and the central government, and further solidifying the USSR's relationship with the international

⁵³ See, for example, S. Dzarasov, "From Quarrel to Peace," *Pravitelstvennyi vestnik*, no. 42 (October), 1990, pp. 1 and 8, translated in FBIS-SOV-90-214, pp. 47-48. Such an idea has also been discussed by analysts at Soviet research institutes such as ISKAN and IMEMO.

community at large. However, given present trends, the willingness of the central leadership to seriously consider such a solution seems remote.

National conflicts in the Soviet Union currently present one of the gravest dangers and challenges to the entire perestroika process. While patriotism for the Union may not ever have been pervasive throughout all the republics, the overt manifestations of nationalism in virtually every republic has come to dominate decisionmaking at the republic level as well as relations between the center and republics. The key question is whether the current tactics Gorbachev has chosen to employ in the Baltics will succeed in keeping the Union together. One factor here will be the extent to which the military proves willing to continue in this role; there are some indications that military leaders feel they have been left to bear all the responsibility for the violence in the Baltics, just as Gorbachev has sought to distance himself from it. If resentment toward Gorbachev builds up along these lines, the present degree of close cooperation should not automatically be expected to continue. What remains unresolved is how to cope with the problems of interethnic conflicts.

APPENDIX
SOVEREIGNTY AND REPUBLIC ARMED FORCES

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SOVEREIGNTY AND REPUBLIC ARMED FORCES

This appendix alphabetically lists each of the USSR's republics, the dates on which they declared independence or sovereignty, and statements by the republic leaderships on service in the armed forces, including the creation of their own. It does not incorporate information about the unofficial paramilitary organizations that already exist in many of the republics.

Armenia declared independence on 23 August 1990. Even before this, on 3 May 1990, at an extraordinary session of the Armenian Supreme Soviet, a resolution was passed that stopped the draft for active duty military and absolved from criminal prosecution those Armenians who had deserted their units. When the republic declared its independence, it also declared its right to have its own armed forces and that conscripts will serve only in Armenia. *Krasnaya zvezda* report that the Pannational Movement armed formations have acquired official status.¹ Finally, on 17 October Armenian Supreme Soviet Chairman Levon Ter-Petrosyan signed a resolution suspending the union draft in the republic and reaffirmed that military service is to be fulfilled in units stationed in Armenia.

Azerbaijan declared sovereignty on 23 September 1989. According to the Azeri Council of Ministers' resolution on 2 October, following agreement by the appropriate union-level organizations, 50 percent of the planned draft quota from Azerbaijan will remain in the republic. Within this context, all draftees going to the military construction troops, MVD, railway engineer troops, civil defense troops, and military forces of the PVO, Air Force, Navy and KGB will remain in Azerbaijan, while 25 percent of those going into the Ground Forces will remain in the republic. There is also a provision to exclude any men whose brother had died in military service since 1985.

Belorussia declared sovereignty on 27 July 1990. The Belorussian Supreme Soviet declaration that the republic has a right to have its own armed forces. In the future it plans to become neutral and a nuclear-free zone.

¹ *Krasnaya zvezda*, 11 December 1990, in FBIS-SOV-90-242, p. 53.

Estonia declared independence on 30 March 1990. The law "On Labor Service in the Estonian SSR," of 15 March 1990, provides for alternative service, if the draftees should so choose. It was reported in mid-September 1990 that the republic was in the process of setting up its own armed forces, starting with two divisions, with plans to create border and police services as well.

Georgia declared sovereignty on 9 March 1990 and subsequently elected a nationalist government on 11 November 1990. The Georgian Supreme Soviet passed a law on 20 June 1990 providing for alternative service. In December 1990, the Georgian Supreme Soviet adopted a law to create the republic's own National Guard that would be attached to the republic's Ministry of Internal Affairs; the initial size is expected to be 12,000 men. At the same time, Georgians have been exempted from conscription into the Soviet army, but in January 1991, the Georgian parliament introduced a draft for the republic's own forces.

Kazakhstan declared sovereignty on 25 October 1990. This sovereignty declaration contains the qualification that the republic claims the right "to define the procedure and the conditions for its citizens' military service" in cooperation with the central authorities.

Kirgizia declared sovereignty on 12 December 1990.

Latvia declared independence on 4 May 1990. On 15 May 1990, the Latvian Supreme Soviet passed a resolution that those who wanted to serve in the military could do so, but those who did not could perform alternative service instead, and that this alternative service does not have to be based on religious or other reasons.

Lithuania declared independence on 11 March 1990. On 17 July 1990, the republic announced that it would create its own army units, that all eligible Lithuanians must serve in the republic's military or must perform alternative service. This was to take effect in the fall of 1990. Military service in the republic would be for 12 months, while alternative service would last for 24 months.

Moldova (Moldavia) declared sovereignty on 23 June 1990. In early September 1990, the Moldovan Supreme Soviet and President issued declarations that the draft was to be suspended for Moldovans, pending negotiations with the central leadership, and that Moldovans could not be punished for refusing to perform military service; but in January 1991 the Moldovan Supreme Soviet revoked this law. Negotiations with Moscow are still seeking to reassign Moldovans controlling interethnic disputes to their own republic so that no conscripts from Moldova would be used in such a role again. Only those who volunteer

to serve outside Moldova would be allowed to do so. It was previously announced that, as of spring 1991, all Moldovans will serve inside the republic, and a National Army of the Moldovan SSR is to be established. An alternative service program is to be established as well. The Supreme Soviet of Moldova decided on 2 November 1990 to establish a republican guard, but Gorbachev's Presidential Decree of 22 December demanded that it be revoked.

Russia declared sovereignty on 11 June 1990. An RSFSR Supreme Soviet resolution in September 1990 stated it was "inadmissible" for Russian citizens to serve in quelling interethnic conflicts and that it reserved the right to suspend the union draft in the republic if the central government did not create volunteer units to be used in such conflicts by 1 November. In line with this, according to an 11 December 1990 declaration, stationing Russian forces outside the RSFSR requires the approval of the Russian government. Following the violence in Lithuania in January 1991, Yeltsin noted that this law was being broken and appealed to the Russian soldiers sent to the Baltics not to use violence. Yeltsin also stated that he plans to accelerate the creation of internal police and security forces in Russia to replace the Soviet KGB and said he would consider the creation of a separate Russian army, although he has since backed away from the idea of creating Russia's own army.²

Tajikistan declared sovereignty on 25 August 1990. A resolution of the Tajik Supreme Soviet on 5 October 1990 stipulated that, as of the fall 1990 draft, Tajik conscripts put into the military construction and construction and engineering units would serve only in the Turkestan Military District, and mainly in Tajik SSR. Those whose brothers had died in peacetime military service or during service in Afghanistan would be exempt from the draft. It also called for the formation of an alternative service policy for those who cannot serve due to health problems.

Turkmenistan declared sovereignty on 22 August 1990. Similar to Kazakhstan's sovereignty declaration, Turkmenistan's declaration stated that the republic "determines the procedure for military service by citizens of the Turkmen SSR."

Ukraine declared sovereignty on 16 July 1990. On the same day, its Supreme Soviet also declared the republic's right to have its own armed forces. Other elements of its

² As reported in David Remnick, "General Ordered Attack, Gorbachev Tells Assembly," *Washington Post*, 15 January 1991, p. A7 and John Lloyd, "Yeltsin Decides Against Russian Army," *Financial Times*, 11, February 1991, p. 14.

announcement are that Ukrainians cannot be used outside the republic's borders without the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet's consent and that the republic will (ultimately) seek neutrality.

Uzbekistan declared sovereignty on 20 June 1990. An Uzbek Presidential decree in early September 1990 stipulated that future drafts of Uzbeks would be worked out through an agreement between the republic and union-level officials on the number of men to be drafted and the conditions under which they would serve. It further outlined that, beginning with the fall 1990 draft, Uzbek conscripts assigned to military construction units would serve only within Uzbekistan; this point was reaffirmed by the Uzbek Council of Ministers resolution of 29 September. Those whose brother had died in the military in peacetime would not be subject to conscription.